



Message from Under Secretary Bruce I. Knight



Bruce I. Knight was confirmed by the Senate on August 6, 2006, as the new Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs.

After 2 months, I'm beginning to feel at home in Marketing and Regulatory Programs. I've met many dedicated APHIS staffers, and I'm looking forward to getting to know more of you.

For the past 4 years, I served as Chief of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, an agency focused on conservation and founded on partnerships. Now, I'm heading a mission area entrusted with safeguarding and promoting U.S. agriculture and facilitating and promoting sales of U.S. agricultural products. Yet these two different aspects of American agriculture actually have a great deal in common.

There is a strong link between conservation and protecting the environment and the health of the animals, plants, and humans who share the land. All of these concerns are interrelated and interdependent. As a farmer and rancher, I also understand the vital importance of fair, open, and orderly markets and the value of encouraging trade, promoting fairness, and reducing barriers.

We live in a small—and diminishing—world. Globalization affects every aspect of agriculture. Everything is increasingly intertwined. Since APHIS is such a far-flung organization, with employees around the globe, you know this.

Perhaps even more important than my experience with NRCS is my time growing up on a

farm in South Dakota. I've sometimes joked that everything I need to know about managing Federal agencies I learned running the farm—the value of hard work and persistence, the need to stay on budget, the importance of optimism, and the seasonal nature of life.

I still own land in South Dakota and run a cow/calf operation. So I understand the importance of herd health and taking preventive action to avoid problems. From my father, I learned to keep accurate and complete records on each animal. And no heifer has ever left my place without a “Bangs” disease vaccination.

In the days ahead, we have many significant issues to address—working with our State and private partners and farmers and ranchers to implement the voluntary animal identification program, harmonizing beef trade, dealing with possible outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian flu as well as trying to control citrus canker, the emerald ash borer, and other plant pests—all the while addressing these issues with the highest level of scientific rigor.

There are also management issues that I know APHIS is working on—like the upcoming retirement wave and succession planning—as well as improving business tools and streamlining operations to increase efficiency. As your Under

Continued on page 2

Meetings

Under Secretary Knight to Host Riverdale Town Hall Meetings

Come meet our new Under Secretary at the upcoming Town Hall meetings. Sessions are scheduled for attendance by program area, but employees are welcome to attend either of the meeting dates below.

October 11, 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. in the Conference Center

Animal Care, Biotechnology Regulatory Services, International Services, Policy and Program Development, Veterinary Services, and Wildlife Services

October 12, 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. in the Conference Center

Legislative and Public Affairs, Plant Protection and Quarantine, and MRP-Business Services



Under Secretary Bruce I. Knight

Continued from page 1

Dolphin Rescue Revisited

By Christa Smith
Anderson

APHIS and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

From rescuing people and pets and getting supplies to stranded livestock, to disposing of carcasses and helping production facilities operate, APHIS employees rose to the challenges of last year's hurricanes. Even the continuation of ordinary services, such as issuing export certificates, became extraordinary tasks and APHIS managed it. These courageous efforts could fill a book. As we mark the anniversary of last year's hurricanes, Inside APHIS looks back at dolphin rescue efforts as one example among many for which the Agency should be proud.

Secretary, I am committed to working with Dr. DeHaven and the rest of your management team to empower you with the resources and support you need to do your jobs. I want to know what's working and what we need to work

on. My door is open, and I value your input. You can count on me to respect and consider your views.

I'm excited about serving as your Under Secretary and working with you and the APHIS leadership team on the many challenges and opportunities facing the agency. ♦

Path of Destruction

As Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast and churned inland, Animal Care (AC) veterinary medical officer (VMO) Dr. Tami Howard was on a phone call when her office in Jackson, Mississippi, went black; Dr. Laurie Gage, AC Big Cat Specialist and a marine mammal expert based in California, was on vacation photographing humpback whales in Tonga; and eight bottlenose dolphins belonging to the Marine Life Aquarium, an Animal Welfare Act (AWA) licensee in Gulfport, Mississippi, were negotiating their survival in the sea.

"Nobody knew if they were alive or dead," Dr. Gage says of the dolphins in the days just after Katrina hit. Before joining APHIS in 2004, Dr. Gage had assisted the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with several marine mammal rescues. In the aftermath of Katrina, witnesses "figured from looking at the pool the dolphins were dead. There was no evidence they were alive." Katrina's 40-foot storm surge had left the pool—with walls approximately 30 feet high—in ruins; it was a maze of broken metal, glass shards, and other debris through which the dolphins were swept.

Signs of Hope

Twelve days after the storm, NOAA scientists spotted the dolphins in the Mississippi Sound. All eight had remained together. Before the official rescue was underway, the facility's head veterinarian delivered much-needed fluids, including antibiotics, to the dolphins by using their trained behavior of swallowing stomach tubes. The trainers were going out three times a day to feed them. "The trainers were the real heroes in this," Dr. Gage says. Conditions in the



Caregivers transport dolphins to a nearby pool onshore. Photo by Laurie Gage.

Continued on page 3

Dolphin Rescue Revisited

Continued from page 2

Sound made the trainers' persistence before and during the rescue all the more noteworthy and the dolphins' survival all the more remarkable. "There was no marine life in the harbor, except for a few seagulls," Dr. Gage remembers. The harbor was eerily quiet.

The captures began once the U.S. Navy had set up dolphin pools in the temporary construction battalion center. Dr. Gage acted as the operation's safety officer and was one of three cetacean vets on-site. As the Marine Life Aquarium's inspector, Dr. Howard observed and documented the rescue effort.

How to Catch a Dolphin

Rather than going out with a boat and net, Dr. Gage says, "We opted to use the dolphins' training to capture them in ways that would cause them the least amount of stress." On Navy mats that could hold up to five people and one or two dolphins, veterinarians and trainers worked with and treated the dolphins each day, then coaxed them onto the mat. From there the dolphins were hoisted on specially-designed stretchers into a boat provided by NOAA and transported to the waiting dolphin pools. One of the most severely wounded of the dolphins—with a dorsal fin that was cut about a third of the way through—was among the first two captured.

Dr. Gage would accompany the dolphins back to the base, performing physicals and drawing blood for laboratory analysis along the way. The operation ran smoothly until the day Dr. Gage was scheduled to leave, when rescue teams returned to the channel and the four remaining dolphins were nowhere to be found. "It was heartbreaking to lose them," Dr. Gage said. Fortunately the loss was temporary.

Heartbreak Turns to Joy

A few days later, a Coast Guard sighting led rescue teams about a dozen miles east to Biloxi, where they found the last four dolphins swimming around in what had been a boat parking area for the Beau Rivage resort and casino. "I'd like to think they were playing the slots that were underwater," Dr. Howard joked.

"I don't want to be anthropomorphic about it, but it really seemed that the animals were happy to



Rescue efforts rely on the dolphins' training and the rescuers' patience and muscles. Photos by Stephen D. McCulloh © 2005.

see us," Dr. Gage said, based on the dolphins' eager response to their trainers.

By the time Dr. Gage and Dr. Howard were leaving Gulfport, the area that had been remarkable for its lack of natural activity just days earlier was, as Dr. Gage describes it, teeming with life. Pelicans were coming back and fish could be seen jumping out of the water. For the Marine Life Aquarium though, the devastation was permanent. "The facility was wiped out. It won't be rebuilt," Dr. Howard says.

Since joining APHIS in 2003, Dr. Howard has logged 93,000 miles carrying out her VMO inspection duties in Mississippi and Tennessee. As she returned to the Gulfport area this spring, Dr. Howard noticed that much of the debris had been removed, but a lot remains to be done in the region. "Things are in recovery," she says. "It will just take some time."

As for the dolphins, all eight are in a new home: the Atlantis resort on Paradise Island in the Bahamas, where they live in a large lagoon and other enclosures. They are healthy, have gained weight, and are reported to be doing great. ♦

Francis J. Mulhern: Our First Administrator (1919–2006)



APHIS' first Administrator, Dr. Francis J. Mulhern, passed away on July 7, 2006, in Laguna Hills, California. He was 87 years old.

Many of us who now work in APHIS likely did not know him. Yet, we are in many ways—whether we know it or not—fulfilling his legacy to U.S. agriculture. Dr. Mulhern was the first to voice our Agency mission as, “protecting the health of U.S. agricultural resources.”

By the time our Agency was formed in 1971, Dr. Mulhern had a long history of service with what were then USDA's animal health bureaus and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). At the time, many of the regulatory pieces of what we now call APHIS were carried out alongside USDA's research programs and functioned as part of ARS. However, in October 1971, USDA's animal and plant regulatory functions were separated from ARS and soon became APHIS much as we now know it.

The new Agency's success, however, was not a given. There was much work to be done under Dr. Mulhern's guiding hand.

“At the time, the re-organization of USDA was a very big change. Eliminating USDA's bureaus was somewhat like the recent creation of Homeland Security,” remembers retired APHIS veterinarian Dr. Saul Wilson.

The Agency needed someone who was able to overcome many difficult challenges. During his tenure as Administrator (1971-1980), Dr. Mulhern proved himself the right person for the job and showed strong leadership and communication skills. To this, he also added his awareness of APHIS' unfolding future and the importance of valuing the people within the Agency.

Mulhern's early years had prepared him well. His upbringing had not been easy, but it had taught him that success takes vision, hope, and effort.

Early Years

Dr. Mulhern was born in Wilmington, Delaware, on January 8, 1919. His parents, Patrick and Mary Mulhern, had a total of eight children. However, by age 15, Mulhern had become an orphan, losing both parents and also five siblings. He ended up leaving high school, but later returned to graduate and eventually relocate to Auburn, Alabama, where he attended The College of Veterinary Medicine. With the love and guidance of his sister, neighbors, and community members, Dr. Mulhern found his way through the steep challenges of his early years.

After earning a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Mulhern worked in Mexico for the United States-Mexico Commission for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease from 1947-1952. The

Continued on page 5

Work Tip

Stand Up for Your Back

By Ginger Dorsey

Contrary to popular belief, sitting, which is thought by most to be a comfortable position, is actually hard on the back, legs, and feet. Sitting for lengthy periods of time can cause increased pressure on the intervertebral discs – the springy, shock-absorbing part of the spine. At the same time, gravity tends to pool blood in the legs and feet and create a sluggish return to the heart.

So, here's a how-to guide to sitting. To obtain and maintain a high level of support and comfort when using your chair, make sure you do the following:

- Adjust seat pan depth so that the back of your knees are approximately 2-3 inches out from the edge of the seat pan.

- Adjust chair height so that your feet rest flat on the floor and are your thighs parallel to the floor. (Use a footrest if necessary)
- Adjust chair lumbar support so that you sit upright in your chair with the lower back supported by the backrest.
- If used, adjust arm rests so that they provide light support to the forearms and allow your shoulders to be relaxed.
- Alternate between sitting and standing positions as you perform your daily tasks.

For questions or concerns regarding your chair or workstation set up, please contact Ginger E. Dorsey, APHIS Ergonomics Program Manager at 301-734-6138 or ginger.e.dorsey@aphis.usda.gov.

Francis J. Mulhern

Continued from page 4

experience was a formative one for Dr. Mulhern and others who worked on the eradication effort's front lines.

For Dr. Mulhern, the work again proved that determination and the support of fellow workers were key to success. Veterinarians worked in remote areas and under dangerous conditions. Some of those working for the Commission were injured or killed by herd owners who did not understand the need to kill their cattle. In some rural areas of Mexico, Commission workers were dubbed the "Cow Killers."

Following his work under the Commission, Dr. Mulhern returned to Washington, D.C. and continued his career, advancing steadily among USDA's ranks. In 1970, Dr. Mulhern became an Associate Administrator for ARS.

With Vision and Leadership

With his goal of establishing APHIS as a model agency, Dr. Mulhern understood that the new Agency needed a clear and simple focus for its mission. By defining that mission as "protecting the health of U.S. agricultural resources" he was able to rally APHIS employees and create for them and Agency stakeholders a distinct organizational purpose and identity.

Using his leadership and communication skills, he built upon this foundation. To him, a model agency got things done; spent its money wisely; regulated firmly but fairly; trained its people; and rewarded its outstanding personnel. He encouraged open communication between his managers and APHIS employees. He firmly believed that this allowed Agency decisionmakers to benefit from the talent and insight of Agency employees.

"He was a dynamic, energetic person with a bit of charisma," says Dr. Wilson of Mulhern. "He wanted APHIS to be the best agency to work for in the Government."

Dr. Mulhern was ahead of his time and a true visionary concerning what would become APHIS' role for U.S. agriculture. He recognized that focusing on one disease alone left agriculture at risk to many others. He led the way in understanding that we had to keep in place the ability to detect and fight emerging diseases. He also saw that APHIS' brucellosis program, while very important, was not unique. Instead,

it was an indicator of the importance of securing a broader and effective animal health infrastructure.

Dr. Mulhern was likewise ahead of his time in understanding that there would be increasing trade among nations. He recognized that this would lead naturally to the Agency needing to develop offshore safeguarding activities and international cooperation. As Administrator, he led the effort to establish a screwworm eradication program in Mexico. He helped establish the North American Plant Protection Organization to ensure cooperation among the North American nations for their common good. Immediately after retiring from APHIS, he became active with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.

Dr. Mulhern's contributions to APHIS are many and his programmatic accomplishments continue to shape the Agency. For those who knew him and worked with him, he is remembered fondly. He reached out to employees and broke down bureaucratic barriers. He possessed a creative, can-do outlook, and he encouraged that outlook in others and in the Agency as a whole.

In tribute to Dr. Mulhern, we honor his memory as a skilled leader and as a fellow APHIS employee. ♦

Poem written by Dr. Frank Mulhern

*Wouldn't this old world be better
If the folks we meet would say
I know something good about you
And treat us just that way*

*Wouldn't it be fine and dandy
If each handclasp was fond and true
Carried with it this assurance
I know something good about you*

*Wouldn't life be lots more happy
If the good that's in us all
Were the only things about us
That folks bothered to recall*

*Wouldn't life be lots more happy
If we praised the good we see
For there's such a lot of goodness
In the worst of you and me*

*Wouldn't it be nice to practice
That fine way of thinking too
You know something good about me
I know something good about you*

DeHaven Hosts Employee Focus Groups and Town Hall Meetings

By Holly O'Brien

APHIS has a long history of communicating with its stakeholders to share information, resolve problems, and develop sound policy. We do this daily through a variety of communications from APHIS offices around the world and through the critical, intimate work of our field staff. In June and July, APHIS Administrator Dr. W. Ron DeHaven approached APHIS employees for a similar information exchange by hosting a series of small focus groups followed by town hall meetings for employees centrally located in Riverdale, Beltsville, Fort Collins, Ames, Minneapolis, and Raleigh.



Dr. DeHaven and employees exchanged insights during recent meetings. Photo by R. Anson Eaglin.

"I wanted to reconnect with employees and to make sure I have a good understanding of the 'sense of the Agency,'" Dr. DeHaven said. "The town hall meetings and focus groups allowed me to share my perspectives with employees and to better understand their views and needs."

During guided conversations led with the assistance of program analysts Dale Rendahl and Jan Grimes, Dr. DeHaven listened intently as supervisory and non-supervisory focus group participants responded to five key questions that focused on employees' job-performance needs, information needs, methods for enhancing relationships with stakeholders, employee professionalism, and upcoming hot issues needing headquarters' attention.

Employee responses varied, but some of the overarching needs identified by the focus groups include: improving internal and external communications; providing more timely and clearly defined requests; sharing informa-

tion about important APHIS issues Agency-wide; creating a functional APHIS employee directory and possibly an APHIS for Dummies user's guide of basic procedures; involving field employees in decisionmaking; and, making science-based policy decisions that also consider politics, economics, and other factors. The focus groups also identified the need to strengthen the APHIS workforce by focusing on succession planning, and enhancing, where necessary, skill sets pertaining to customer service and professionalism.

During the town hall meetings, Dr. DeHaven provided an overview of the challenges he has faced as Administrator during a period of intense media coverage of APHIS issues. He also shared some of the issues raised by the focus group participants as well as some of his priorities for the Agency. Those priorities include: furthering our avian influenza prevention and preparation efforts, reducing the backlog of Freedom of Information Act requests, reforming our rulemaking procedures for trade issues, and succession planning. Dr. DeHaven ended each town hall meeting by addressing questions posed by employees.

Dr. DeHaven plans to address the important issues raised through the focus groups and town hall meetings through APHIS and program strategic and operational planning efforts. For starters, the Administrator's office is now e-mailing to employees the APHIS Weekly Activity Report, which has long been provided to the Secretary's office. This weekly e-mail alerts employees to the important issues addressed by APHIS programs that week. APHIS employees can expect to see additional gradual changes and improvements stemming from the employee-to-Administrator exchanges.

"At every location, I was impressed with the very capable, enthusiastic, hardworking, and committed groups of APHIS employees. We all have worked hard and met extraordinary challenges, and I have no doubt that we will continue to do so in the future," Dr. DeHaven said. ♦

Speaking of APHIS: New Workshop Available

By John Scott



Rochelle Langley and Abed Onwona enjoying lessons and laughter in the classroom. Photo by John Scott.

"This is fun stuff....if you've come here to suffer, you're in the wrong room," trainer Betsy Guardiola joked recently to a class of APHIS employees. Guardiola, along with fellow instructor Elaine Gilbert, were leading a new course designed to help employees overcome the challenges of public speaking and delivering training.

The new, 2-day course, "Training and Presentation Skills Workshop" targets both new and experienced speakers and trainers. The course covers everything from overcoming nervousness to how to analyze an audience and craft your presentation. It's a hands-on course that's designed to warmly welcome students to the art of public speaking and delivering training. Both of which are much needed Agency skills.

Class size is kept small—about 25—so that everyone is comfortable and has a chance to participate. According to Gilbert, recent public surveys show that many people fear public speaking more than death. Knowing that some participants may be hesitant, course instructors work hard to pace the workshop and encourage participation.

The classes include people with various levels of experience. Many participants benefit from swapping stories and sharing helpful tips. "I picked up some good tips on improving my presentations," said John Capehart with the Employee Services Division. "In fact, I've spent time this week revising my powerpoint presentations."

Each workshop begins with a self-assessment to help students focus on their specific goals. Students are then guided through a series of discussions and exercises. For some, the class is a way to refine existing skills, to spice up presentations, and to better use visual aids. For others, the class offers valuable tips on managing an audience and developing essential messages for adult learners. And for others still, the class is a basic introduction to public speaking and training.

Tim Blackburn, Director for Training and Development, said that the new course came about

after the Agency's Policy and Program Development program completed a review of the Agency's non-technical training.

"One thing they saw was that the Agency could better utilize its technical experts by strengthening their skills as presenters and trainers. As an Agency, we serve a lot of different groups and having more effective presenters and trainers is important to our success as an Agency," Blackburn noted.

The Training and Development staff is making a strong push in the upcoming months to make the workshop available to both headquarters and central field locations. Based on a survey of Agency programs, about 500 people have been given priority for workshop registration, but the course is available to all interested employees.

Employee comments on the course have been positive. "I hadn't given presentations before," said Traci Ridley, with MRP Business Services. "I have one next week. This is going to really help. I think everyone should take this class."

For more information and to register for the course, you can contact Cindy Pericak in Training & Development at 301-734-4990. Her e-mail is cynthia.m.pericak@aphis.usda.gov. ♦

"I think everyone should take this class."

-Tracey Ridley



Bill Aley making his point during a workshop group exercise. Photo by John Scott.

USDA Rewards Good Service

USDA recently presented awards to several familiar faces in Riverdale. At an award ceremony in June 2006, USDA recognized the achievements of four ARC of D.C. employees: Angela Reid, Charlotte Curtis, Dale Haynes, and their supervisor, Grace Lewis.

As employees in APHIS' Printing, Distribution, Mail and Copier Solutions, Administrative Services Division, each was awarded for continuous service and the many diversified services

provided to the Agency. Charlotte Curtis began work for APHIS in 1987, followed by Angela Reid in 1990 and Dale Haynes in 1991. Grace Lewis came to APHIS in 2006. ARC of D.C. is an organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life of persons with mental retardation and their families through supports and advocacy. ♦

Get Fresh at Your Local Farmers Market

Even as fresh summer produce becomes hard to find, you can still look forward to the fresh fall crops coming in at your local Farmers Markets. To find a market in your area, visit www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/ for more information.

As a reminder, headquarter employees can easily reach the Riverdale Market hosted weekly on Thursdays at the Riverdale Park Town Center from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. During November, the market is open until 6:00 p.m.

"It's real close and has great fresh produce, flowers, and local hand-made crafts," said BRS'

Andie Huberty, who has gone to the market for the last 5 years. "They've got everything you'd want from a Farmers Market and live music." Apples, pears, mums, and more are now available. The Riverdale Market features about 15 vendors.

You can learn about the market's weekly specials, recipes, and also featured vendors and live music in the market's weekly newsletter. Sign-up sheets and information are available at the market to receive the newsletter on your home computer. ♦



Shoppers sample local produce at the Riverdale Farmer's Market which runs through November 16th. Photo by R. Anson Eaglin.

New Screwworm Facility: Saving Producers \$900 Million

By Mandi Frederick



Screwworm eradication efforts, which save U.S. livestock producers an estimated \$900 million annually, will now be aided by the soon-to-be-completed Panama Mass Rearing and Research Facility. On July 12, 2006, USDA representatives joined Panamanian President Martin Torrijos, U.S. Ambassador to Panama William Eaton, and Panamanian agriculture officials to inaugurate the facility. The new \$40 million, 210-acre facility will house more than 250 employees and is devoted to studying and producing sexually sterile New World screwworms. At full capacity, the facility will be able to produce up to 150 million sterilized flies per week. The flies are a central component to USDA's screwworm eradication efforts.

The center will be jointly run by APHIS and the U.S.-Panamanian Commission for the Eradication and Prevention of Screwworms, also known as COPEG. Scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) will be located in the new facility to provide continuing research support.

"There is worldwide interest in the program activities at the new facility and in the research we have planned for the future," says Dr. H. Christian Hoffman, International Services Associate Regional Director in Panama. In addition to providing support, ARS scientists are working to develop new technologies for irradiation and are researching the possibility of genetically engineering male-only screwworms. ♦

Celebrating APHIS' Diversity

National Hispanic Heritage Month runs from September 15th through October 15th. Check your email for upcoming events and speakers at headquarters and field offices. At headquarters, some events will carry over into October.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Special Emphasis Program Managers are organizing events now.

Ask your unit manager about how you can get involved!

Special Emphasis Program Manager contact information for headquarters and field offices is available at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/crec/APHISFY2006SEPMNetworkingDirectory.pdf> ♦

2006 CFC Kickoff: Be a Star in Someone's Life!

By Ruth Goldberg



Sometime soon, if it hasn't happened already, you'll notice a change in the atmosphere around APHIS. It's not just that we've begun a new fiscal year, or that the holidays are coming. At headquarters, or out in the field, you may be approached by employees behaving strangely—selling raffle tickets, performing karaoke, or peddling delicious baked goods to unsuspecting coworkers.

It happens every fall—the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). The CFC is an annual fundraising drive conducted by Federal employees in their workplaces, raising millions of dollars to benefit thousands of local, national, and international nonprofit organizations. These organizations serve community needs in the areas of poverty, hunger, healthcare, education, and cultural enrichment. In 2005, the CFC received pledges totaling a record-breaking \$268.5 million.

With the theme “Be a Star in Someone's Life! Support the CFC,” the 2006 CFC campaign

is reaching out to Federal employees everywhere. The official dates for the national campaign are September 1, 2006 to December 15, 2006; however, the dates of local CFC campaigns vary. APHIS is a leading contributor to the Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area (CFCNCA), the largest successful workplace giving campaign in the world, involving the nearly 350,000 Federal employees in the Washington Metropolitan Area and beyond. While some employees in the field participate in their local CFC campaigns, others join the majority of APHIS employees in contributing to the CFCNCA. Individual CFC donations can be made by check or by payroll deduction, spread out over the year. Additionally, many programs within APHIS develop their own fundraising activities.

What to Look For

Some programs have annual traditions, while others try a different activity each year, whether it's a book sale, cooking contest, or an afternoon tea. Western Region employees in Fort Collins have donated art, furnishings, food, and other items to be auctioned, held a Halloween Costume contest where employees vote with coins for their favorite costume, and put on a special “Salad Day.” LPA sells Krispy Kreme® donuts each year. For the past two years, the BRS staff has held a silent auction in Riverdale; to bring in a bigger crowd, BRS coordinated their 2005 event with the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security staff's bake sale and raffle. BRS auction items included homemade pottery, an Ocean City vacation, and lunch with Administrator DeHaven.

PPQ gets extra points for enthusiasm: The staff holds multiple events, sometimes as many as one per week for the duration of the campaign. In 2005 these included a pizza sale, a rummage sale, a silent auction, three raffles, karaoke, and a chili cook-off. The 2005 PPQ team measured their progress every week against their own financial goals and against the performance of the other programs. Not surprisingly, they were out ahead of the pack every week. This year, the Agency's National Wildlife Research Center has gotten off to the earliest start with an official kickoff event in September. In addition, the NWRC will hold a chili cook off and barbecue, a silent auction, bake sale, and several guessing games with prizes.

Although creativity, camaraderie, and competition are all part of the APHIS CFC experience, the CFC campaign is primarily about contributing. Each of us can be a star of this year's effort. Even the smallest gift of money, time, and energy becomes powerful in combination with thousands of other small gifts. That's why it's called the *Combined Federal Campaign*. ♦



APHIS Manager Profile



Dr. Elizabeth A. Lautner

*Director, Veterinary Services,
National Veterinary Services
Laboratories*

What is your background?

I was raised on a livestock and fruit farm in northern Michigan. Following graduation from Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, I first practiced in northwest Iowa in a mixed practice. I then operated a swine health consulting practice while completing a Masters of Science degree at the University of Minnesota.

After practice, I headed up the Science and Technology Department at the National Pork Producers Council and the National Pork Board. Most recently, I spent 2 years serving as the Plum Island Animal Disease Center Director for the Department of Homeland Security.

What prompted your move to APHIS?

There has never been a more exciting time to be at NVSL! There is a unique convergence of increasing mission responsibilities and expectations with many emerging and re-emerging diseases, laboratory networks, and new facilities at the National Centers for Animal Health at Ames. I believe diagnostics are the cornerstone of animal health!

Most memorable APHIS experiences?

I just joined APHIS in May 2006, so I am looking forward to creating memories! I have always admired the dedication and expertise of APHIS personnel, and it is an honor to be part of APHIS Veterinary Services.

Priorities for the coming months?

Learning more about APHIS programs. Strengthen NVSL's position as a premier world-class labora-

tory AND a great place to work. Updating and continuing to implement NVSL's strategic plan. Working with partners to continue creating the vision for and implementation of a comprehensive national laboratory system.

Accomplishments most proud of?

Professionally—regardless of positions I have held, I like contributing to the creation of new, relevant knowledge and presenting that science to policy-makers and others to use for good decisionmaking.

Personally—family that works together to reach our individual and collective goals and has fun all along the way. Surviving kindergarten and college orientation in the same year.

Last book read?

Good to Great and the Social Sectors (A Monograph) by Jim Collins and also Blue Ocean Strategy by W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne.

Guilty pleasure?

Chocolate, chocolate, and more chocolate.

Favorite meal?

My spouse's Thanksgiving dinner (I am allowed to set the table).

Favorite movies?

All the Mighty Ducks and Godzilla movies.

Hobbies?

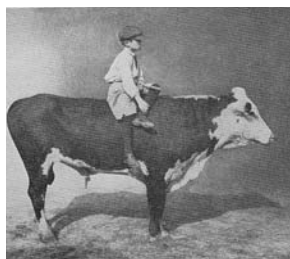
Reading, going to soccer games, and moving kids in and out of the house.

Dawna Boney works with recent participants in the Agency's Operation Jumpstart II Training Program, (left to right) Kevin Williams, Sandra Rickett, and Linda Jackson. Six students recently completed the program's coursework in preparation for careers in Government. For more information about the program, contact Dawna Boney at 301-734-5747. Photo by R. Anson Eaglin.



Tracking Ticks: 100 Years in the Saddle

By Kathleen Davis



Cover photo from the 1912 USDA Book, "The Story of the Cattle-Fever Tick: What Every Child Should Know About Cattle Ticks."

Fred Garza rises at daybreak to get ready for work. The first thing he does? Feed his horse and saddle up.

Garza works for one of APHIS' oldest and most successful programs, the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program (CFTEP), which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. The "new guy" at camp, Garza has been a mounted patrol inspector, or "tick rider," with the program for 10 years.

Before the CFTEP began in 1906, the ticks were widespread throughout the entire southern United States. Direct and indirect economic losses were estimated in 1906 to be \$130.5 million—about \$3 billion today. By 1943, the CFTEP inspectors had helped eradicate fever ticks from all areas except a permanent quarantine zone in Texas along the Mexico border.

Today, Garza and 60 other inspectors still patrol the quarantine zone, about 900 miles of land parallel to the Rio Grande River. In many ways, Garza carries out his work the same way CFTEP inspectors did a century ago.

"The science was sound enough when the program started," says Ed Bowers, Director of Field Operations for the CFTEP and former inspector for 19 years, "that we basically do it the same way—beat the tick right to the river bank."

Garza spends most of the day alone, patrolling a 15-mile territory on the riverfront. He carries a machete to cut back brush and vegetation growing along his trail. He watches for "things that don't fit"—unfamiliar tracks on the trail, an unbranded cow in a herd of registered cattle—searching for signs of stray or smuggled animals with possible exposure to fever ticks.

When he finds suspect animals, he ropes, inspects, and sprays them. He then brings them to swim through the city dipping vat, a 7-foot deep canal-like structure filled with tickicide solution that disinfects the animals.

Cowboy Skills

Inspectors like Garza are key to the long-standing success of the CFTEP. Bringing the quarantine directly to suspect animals and immediately stopping them reduces the window of opportunity for the ticks—which reproduce rapidly—to build up and spread.

When it comes to catching fever ticks, there are no second chances. Missing even one cow exposed to cattle fever ticks could mean the beginning of a devastating outbreak.

The job requires a rare set of skills. "What we need is a trained cowboy," Bowers says. "We can teach 'em the other stuff, but we can't make a cowboy out of 'em."

And not just any cowboy will do. As Bowers explains, working with wild and unpredictable livestock is risky enough. Carrying out this work alone amid the harsh terrain and illegal activities

on the river—smuggling, drug running, river bandits along the banks is downright dangerous.

But most inspectors, including Garza, wouldn't have it any other way. He grew up in Texas along the U.S.-Mexico border watching the riders work and always wanted to be one of them. Even though he was raised around ranches, Garza

still finds the job exciting.

"There's that saying," he says. "Find a job you like, and you'll never work a day in your life."

As for so many inspectors, being a tick rider is more than a job to Garza. It's a way of life, one that he shares with past generations in his family, including his uncle, who worked over 50 years with USDA as an inspector. His uncle started as a compliance officer helping to combat foot-and-mouth disease after World War II. Though even Garza admits, his job is not for everyone.

"You gotta be raised to like it," he says, "and really have a family that can understand that the job is very important."

"Find a job you like, and you'll never work a day in your life."

-Fred Garza

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 12

Same Threat, New Challenges

More than 60 years after the initial eradication of the fever tick, most people have no memory or knowledge of the devastation the pest once caused to the U.S. cattle industry. And with the CFTEP's hard work and longstanding success, it's easy to forget that fever ticks still pose an imminent threat to our Nation's cattle.

"It's almost like the program's done such a good job that people have lost awareness of the threat," says Bowers.

As the CFTEP celebrates its centennial anniversary, the program is confronting serious new challenges: increasing populations of white-tailed deer and other wild animals that can carry fever ticks; the pests' increasing resistance to Coumaphos, the only tickicide currently approved in our country to kill fever ticks; and an improved habitat for fever ticks in Texas and other southern States.

Program officials have been working closely with USDA's Agricultural Research Service to address these problems. While they have come up with a number of innovative ways to control ticks on wild animals, and developed various methods for detecting tick resistance, the resources available for controlling and killing the ticks are still limited. If the ticks are reintroduced into this country, it would be extremely difficult to eradicate them again.

"There's this specter in the background of resistance," says Bowers. "We don't have anything in our toolkit to replace the tickicide we have now."

With these new and evolving concerns, the work of the CFTEP inspectors is more important than ever. Fortunately, people like Garza not only accept this responsibility, they embrace it.

"Most inspectors stay for a lifetime," says Bowers. "They're quite a group of men." ♦

"What we need is a trained cowboy."

-Ed Bowers



Much of the Tick Rider program's work is done from the saddle.

Top of the Crop in PPQ:

PPQ Deputy Administrator's Safeguarding Awards

Dr. Richard Dunkle, Deputy Administrator for Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ), recently presented several Safeguarding Awards in praise of PPQ employee efforts. The Deputy Administrator's Safeguarding Awards are presented annually to both individuals and PPQ teams. While the awards are divided into various categories of service, they each highlight the important contributions that recipients have made in fulfilling PPQ's mission to safeguard U.S. agriculture and plant resources.



Dr. Phillip Mason

Safeguarding Awards

PPQ recognized Plant Survey Specialist, Dr. Phillip Mason for his development of a Pest Survey Outreach Series, a database developed to inform stakeholders and cooperators of impending pest problems throughout the country. The database enables quick distribution of exotic pest information to field personnel for outreach activities. Because it includes PowerPoint presentations, the database serves as an information-rich resource of outreach materials for PPQ and USDA, as well as Agency stakeholders.

Dr. Dunkle also recognized the work of PPQ's Treatment Quality Assurance Unit (TQAU) for its design and development of a web-based intelligence system. TQAU is the first unit within PPQ's Center for Plant Health Science and Technology (CPHST) to receive the Safeguarding Award.

TQAU Director, Scott Wood, says, "I am very proud of this great award and feel that it reflects the high quality work of the TQAU team. I encourage other groups in CPHST to apply for this award in the future because I know that so much outstanding research is being conducted within CPHST."

TQAU's system consists of two main components. The first is a web-based 429 database application that allows PPQ officers to enter data for commodity fumigations at ports. It streamlines report approval and creates real-time report summaries. The second piece of the system



TQAU (left to right): Ian Winborne, Megan Remmers, Richard Dunkle, Scott Wood, Jeffrey Beaman, Kellie Shobe, Dean Komm.

consists of three web-based reference systems: the Web-based Treatment Manual Index; the Web-based Container and Vessel Certification & Tracking Database; and the Q56 Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Web-based Reference Database.

In combination, the system's database-driven web applications share information with each other resulting in a highly integrated intelligence system. The system delivers information quickly, and it's easy to navigate and needs no special software—other than a web browser—to use.

Outstanding Achievement Awards

In the Deputy Administrator's Outstanding Achievement Award category, Dr. Dunkle presented three awards to recognize employee efforts that resulted in exceeding the program's project goals.

PPQ's Environmental Monitoring Team was awarded for its behind-the-scenes efforts to support the environmental compliance of PPQ's Emergency and Domestic Programs. The team members awarded include: Ron Berger, Robert Baca, Susan Bright and Kiesett Newton. Collectively, their efforts reduced the number of environmental lawsuits filed against the program.

The two other Outstanding Achievement Award recipients—the USDA/CDFA Cooperative Fruit Fly/Preventive Release Program and The Multi-Agency Smuggled Citrus Bud Wood Group—were featured in the last issue of *Inside APHIS*. ♦

Environmental Monitoring Team (left to right): Jim Writer, Linda Pratt, Ron Berger, Bob Baca, Susan Bright, and Kiesett Newton.

